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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of three different modes of presentation on elementary education majors' selection and rating of materials for reading instruction. Materials were chosen to represent each of the following propaganda techniques: glittering generalities, name calling, transfer, testimonial, bandwagon, and card stacking. Students in two undergraduate reading classes were randomly assigned to three modes of presentation: group one studied six sets of materials; group two studied the brochures which advertised the materials; and group three studied only the content of the brochures, in mimeographed form. The materials were then rated on a four-point scale. No significant differences were revealed among the three modes of presentation, between the two classes, or in the interaction of modes and classes. Significant differences were apparent in the rating of the six sets of materials and in the interaction of the modes of presentation and the materials. While the interaction of classes and materials was significant, the interaction of modes of presentation, classes, and materials was not.
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A Study of the Influence of Advertising Techniques on Selection of Instructional Reading Materials by Prospective Teachers

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Introduction.

Materials for reading instruction are proliferating at an astounding rate. Basal programs predominated for many years, but are giving ground to other devices. Media materials include cassette and tape programs, filmstrips, records, and machines of great variety. Kits take advantage of the American predilection for packaged materials and include books, activity cards, games, etc. Paperbacks, individualized reading packages, games, newspapers, all are included in the

CS002661

forms of reading materials available for purchase. This superabundance coupled with limited budgets and specialized needs raises many questions concerning the selection and purchase of materials. Johnson (1969) and Ruvin (1969) have provided excellent sets of suggestions as to how materials should be selected but all too often these kinds of suggestions are not taken. Materials are generally ordered by teachers or principals in individual schools who are relatively unsophisticated in the sphere of materials evaluation. In some cases the materials themselves are examined, but often materials are purchased on the strength of the descriptive brochures.

Thus, we assume the selection is influenced by the propaganda techniques utilized by these brochures as well as by their attractive formats. Spache (1968) pointed out, "We teachers of reading must face the ugly fact that in considering instructional techniques and materials, we don't exercise the critical thinking that we claim to teach our pupils to do."

The present study was designed to examine modes of sales presentations, holding constant, to a degree, the kinds of propaganda techniques used. Specifically, the investigators sought to learn whether there would be any significant differences in materials selection when subjects choose those materials on the basis of a study of: 1. the advertising brochures 2. the content of the brochures in a plain format 3. the actual materials themselves.

Procedure.

Materials housed in the University of Georgia materials center were matched with their descriptive brochures and classified into

seven catagories: paperbacks; high-interest/low vocabulary; games; kits; individualized reading packages; media; and supplementary materials. Twenty-one sets of materials were then selected by randomly choosing three materials from each classification.

A pilot study was then run with a class of 27 graduate students enrolled in a materials evaluation course. Classroom instruction was provided in recognizing the seven propaganda techniques described by Smith (1963) and Heilman (1972). These propaganda techniques were: glittering generalities; name calling; transfer; testimonial; plain folks; band wagon; and card stacking.

Each subject in the pilot study was instructed to identify the dominant propaganda technique in each of the twenty-one brochures. Six brochures were clearly identified which had one of six different propaganda techniques as their dominant technique. No brochure was identified that had "plain folks" as its dominant propaganda technique. In fact, this particular technique was not mentioned by any pilot subject concerning any of the twenty-one brochures. The six brochures that were identified and their corresponding materials were selected for the final study.

To determine whether some subjects might be sold by the format and art work on the brochure, a special mode of presentation was provided. All the content of the brochures was typed and mimeographed.

Two classes of undergraduates, elementary education majors who were taking the beginning course in reading, were selected as subjects for the main study. These naive subjects were selected to preclude their being familiar with any of the materials. Within each class

these subjects were randomly assigned to three modes of presentation. Group One was asked to study the actual materials and rate them. Group Two was asked to study the six brochures and rate the materials they described. Group Three was asked to study the six sets of mimeographed materials and rate the materials described. All groups were instructed that they had thirty minutes in which to study their assigned materials. At the end of that time they were given the rating sheets. These instructions were on the rating sheet.

> Without considering cost or ease of purchasing, you are to rank the above six sets of materials, in terms of the contribution you believe they would make to a school's reading program. You are to assume your school has a reasonable amount of money to spend, but you cannot afford to buy things of negligible value. Rank the six sets of materials according to the following:
>
> I strongly advise purchasing this material----------4
>
> I advise purchasing this material----------3
>
> I advise against purchasing this material----------2
>
> I strongly advise against purchasing this material--------1

The groups were unaware that their assignments were different and the assignments were presented as a regular part of their course work.

The ratings were done on a four point scale developed by the authors for rating instructional materials. No neutral point was provided since this is the usual case in questions concerning materials purchasing in the public schools.

Results.

An analysis of variance, reported in Table 1, revealed that there were no significant differences between the three modes of presentation,

the two classes or the interaction of the modes of presentation and the classes.

There were significant differences at the .01 level in the way the six materials were rated and in the interaction of the modes of presentation and materials. The interaction of classes and materials was significant at the .05 level while interaction of modes of presentation, classes and materials was not significant.

Insert Table 1

Although the ratings of the materials were significantly different, the investigators were not concerned with determining which ones were different. However, the interaction between materials and modes of presentation was of concern in the study. Although an analysis of the material ratings was significant at the .01 level, it cannot be unambiguously evaluated because of a significant interaction between the material and the mode of presentation shown in Figure 1. It may be

Insert Figure 1

seen that there is a definite ordering of the value of the materials; however, the ordering was not consistent across the mode of presentation. The group that had the materials seems to give unique results from the other two modes of presentation (i.e. the ordering of the materials appears to be different from the other two.) See also Tables 2 and 3.

Insert Tables 2 and 3

Conclusions.

There were no significant differences in the ratings for possible purchase of materials representing six different advertising propaganda techniques when the subjects studied the actual materials, when they studied the brochures describing the materials and when they studied the content of the brochures in mimeographed form.

Subjects did rate the materials significantly differently, but this finding was beclouded by interaction effects of the materials and modes of presentation and the interaction effects of the materials and the two classes.

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Table 1

Analysis of Variance of Ratings of Six Sets of Reading Materials by Three Modes of Presentation

Source of Variation	d.f.	M.S.	F-Ratios
Between Ss			
Groups (G) (modes of presentation)	2	.3472	.6134
Classes (C)	3	.2812	.4968
GC	2	.3751	.6627
Error	42	.5660	
Within Ss			
Materials (M)	5	7.9285	10.1363**
GM	10	2.1097	2.8983**
CM	5	2.0563	2.9655*
GCM	10	1.0875	1.5684
Error	210	.6934	

** .01 level of significance

* .05 level of significance

Figure 1

Interaction Between Six Sets of Reading Materials and Three Modes of Presentation (G)

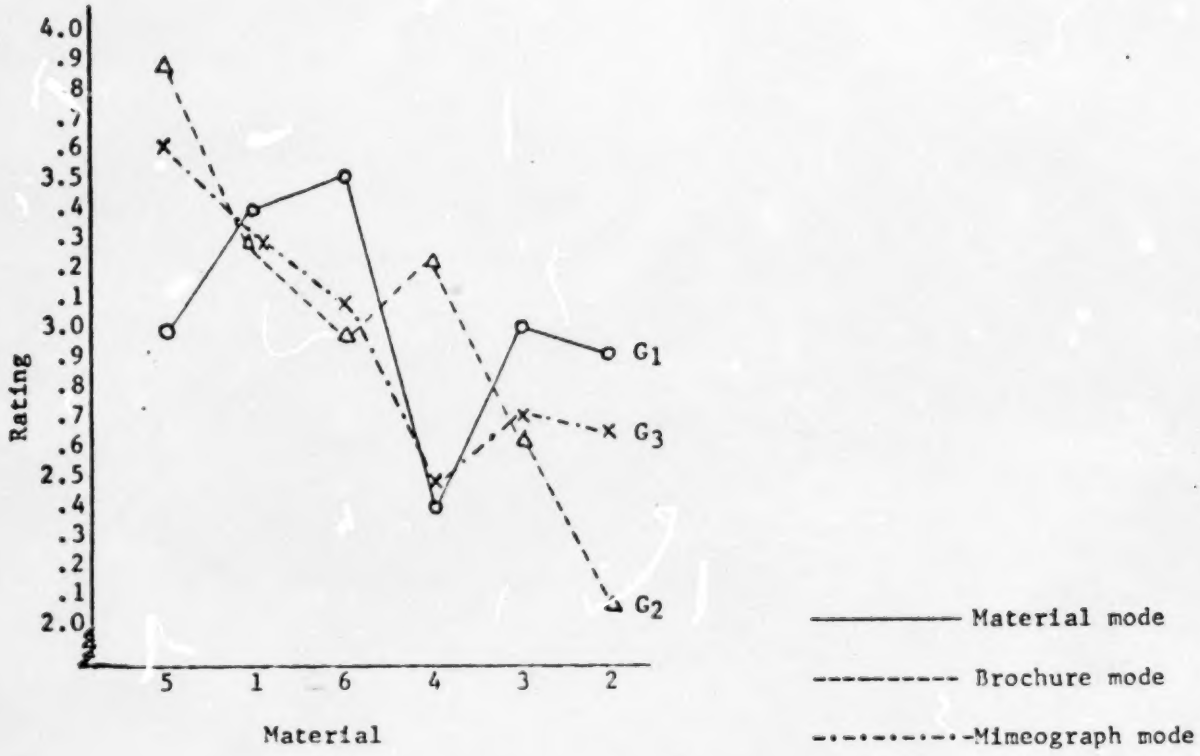

Table 2

Average Ratings Given to Six Sets of Reading Materials by Three Modes of Presentation

Mode	Material 1	2	3	4	5	6	Mode Average
G_1 (material)	3.3750	2.8125	3.0625	2.4375	3.0000	3.5000	3.0312
G_2 (brochure)	3.3125	2.1250	2.6250	3.1875	3.8750	3.1250	3.0417
G_3 (mimeograph)	3.3125	2.6250	2.3750	2.5000	3.6250	3.1250	2.9271
Material Average	3.3333	2.5208	2.6875	2.7083	3.5000	3.2500	

Table 3

Ordering of Six Sets of Reading Materials by the Three Modes of Presentation

	Material Number					
G_1 (material)	6	1	3	5	2	4
G_2 (brochure)	5	1	4	6	3	2
G_3 (mimeograph)	5	1	6	2	4	3
Overall order	5	1	6	4	3	2